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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Report of the Executive Committee of the Programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Fifty-second session (1-5 October 2001)

General Assembly
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Fifty-sixth Session
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Note

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Opening of the Session

1. The Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme held its fifty-second session at the Palais des Nations in Geneva from 1 to 5 October 2001. It was opened by the outgoing Chairman, His Excellency, Ambassador Ali Khorram (Islamic Republic of Iran).

2. Ambassador Khorram paid tribute to the High Commissioner for his useful initiatives since taking office, noting that the past year had been one of transition with new appointments in the senior management team.

3. He recalled that his main priorities at the outset of his tenure had been two-fold. He had sought to encourage and enhance dialogue between host and donor countries in order to foster mutual understanding, and to reassure host countries that they were not alone in attempting to fulfil their commitments on behalf of the international community. In the course of the year, he had addressed the Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC) as Chairman of the UNHCR Executive Committee, calling attention to the need for a global strategy to address the root causes of the problem of refugees and displacements. His other priority had concerned staff security on which constructive discussions had taken place. Continued vigilance by all concerned, including the Committee, was still necessary.

4. The outgoing Chairman noted with satisfaction that the past year had been fruitful, with the adoption of 10 decisions and conclusions at the fifty-first session. These included one on the Pledging Conference and another on World Refugee Day that had subsequently been endorsed by the General Assembly in New York and implemented in the course of the year. The process of Global Consultations on International Protection had been initiated and would continue into 2002. The Executive Committee had also played a more active role in respect of programme and funding issues, and had been regularly consulted during the process of Actions 1,2 and 3. In this context, he had shared views with the High Commissioner on a number of issues, insisting in particular on the need for measures to enhance the role of host developing countries in the decision-making process. He had also reiterated the importance of increasing international solidarity and burden-sharing with a view to providing more assistance and financial resources to UNHCR.

5. In closing, the outgoing Chairman recalled the enriching and stimulating experience he had had during his term of office, including visits to refugee camps in Thailand and the Caucasus.

B. Election of Officers

6. Under Rule 10 of its Rules of Procedure, the Committee elected the following officers by acclamation:

Chairman: H.E. Ambassador Johan Molander (Sweden)

Vice-Chairman: H.E. Ambassador Fisseha Yimer (Ethiopia)

Rapporteur: Mr. Hajime Kishimori (Japan)

C. Representation on the Committee

7. The following members of the Committee were represented at the session:

Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Venezuela.

8. The Governments of the following States were present as observers:

Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Iceland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malawi, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Swaziland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Viet Nam, Yemen, Yugoslavia (Federal Republic), Zambia.

9. Palestine was represented as an observer.

10. Also present as observers were: Council of Europe, Council of the European Union, European Commission, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), League of Arab States, Organization of African Unity (OAU), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Sovereign Order of Malta.

11. The United Nations system was represented as follows:

United Nations, United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near-East (UNRWA), United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), International Labour Organization (ILO), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

12.A total of 67 non-governmental organizations were represented by observers.

D. Adoption of the Agenda and other Organizational Matters

13.The Executive Committee adopted by consensus the following agenda (A/AC.96/955):

1. Opening of the session

2. Election of officers

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

4. Statement by the High Commissioner and general debate

5. Reports on the work of the Standing Committee

   (a) International protection

   (b) Programme, administrative and financial matters

6. Consideration and adoption of UNHCR's annual programme budget for 2002

7. Reports relating to programme oversight

8. Meetings of the Standing Committee in 2002

9. Consideration of the provisional agenda of the fifty-third session of the Executive Committee

10. Any other business

11. Adoption of the report of the fifty-second session of the Executive Committee

12. Closure of the session

E. Opening Statement by the Chairman of the Executive Committee

14.The incoming Chairman of the Committee, His Excellency, Ambassador Johan Molander (Sweden) confirmed that staff security must continue to figure prominently on the agenda, undertaking to continue the valuable work initiated by his predecessor. He acknowledged the invaluable contribution made by the Rapporteur of the fifty-first session, Mr. Haiko Alfeld (South Africa), in guiding the third track of the Global Consultations on International Protection and for his successful conduct of the consultations on the Committee's draft conclusions and decisions. He also paid tribute to the outgoing Assistant High Commissioner, Mr. Søren Jessen-Petersen, for his many years of dedicated, energetic and committed work.

15.The Chairman then outlined his key objectives for the year ahead. He first emphasized the need to focus on the potential of refugees to become contributors to development - both in their countries of asylum and upon their return home.

This focus would help give refugees back their dignity, in line with the theme of "Respect" in UNHCR's 50th anniversary year. He also called attention to the special capacity and role that refugee women had to offer - one that was frequently underutilized.

16. Referring to the suggestions presented by the High Commissioner under Action 3, the Chairman intended to call informal consultations on refining the mechanisms for funding and burden-sharing. He also expressed his strong commitment to the pursuit of the Global Consultations process which dealt with the heart of UNHCR's mandate. The third track meetings had provided a useful format for discussions on how to meet protection needs in a context of new challenges not foreseen by the 1951 Convention relating to Status of Refugees and hoped that, in the course of the coming year, the Global Consultations would identify challenges and point to follow-up action which would strengthen the international protection regime.

17. In closing, he referred to the tragic terrorist attacks of 11 September and urged the "family of nations" to resist any inclination to use this as a pretext to undermine the right to seek and enjoy asylum, or to stir up animosity towards asylum-seekers or refugees. Finally, he stressed his determination to mobilize the various capacities of the Executive Committee to assist the High Commissioner to fulfil his role in promoting durable solutions to refugee situations.

II. WORK OF THE FIFTY-SECOND SESSION

18. The High Commissioner delivered an opening statement as the basis for the general debate. This statement is contained in Annex II.

19. The Committee also heard a statement by the High Commissioner for Human Rights in which she spoke on issues of responsibility for addressing the protection needs of vulnerable persons within complex emergency situations. This work necessitated diverse and complementary action and strategies, according to the mandates of the various organisations or actors. The core nature of protection work had its legal foundations in refugee law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The Commission on Human Rights and its mechanisms were providing useful clarification of the implications of human rights law and practice. She also described human rights field operations in complex emergency situations, adding that her Office still needed to learn from the experience of protection work accumulated over many years by UNHCR and ICRC.

20. The High Commissioner for Human Rights then outlined the areas in which her Office could support the work of protection in the field: providing human rights technical advice and assistance; facilitating or assisting initiatives to combat climates of impunity; and assisting efforts to advocate for victims, including through human rights monitoring, reporting and analysis. In closing, she drew attention to the current crisis in the region of Afghanistan and reconfirmed her Office's commitment to working in partnership with other agencies in order to help address the critical protection needs of the Afghan people.

21. The Chairman's summary of the general debate is contained in Annex III. The full account of the deliberations of the Committee, including the statements or other interventions made by delegations on all the agenda items of the meeting, as well as the closing statements by the Chairman and the High Commissioner, are contained in the summary records of the session.

III. DECISIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE[1]

A. Conclusion on international protection

22. *The Executive Committee,*

General

(a) *Notes* that the year 2001 marks the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which together with its 1967 Protocol, has continuously served as the cornerstone of the international refugee protection regime;

(b) *Notes* with satisfaction that one hundred and forty-one States are now party to one instrument or both, *encourages* States and UNHCR to strengthen their efforts to promote broader accession to these instruments and *stresses* the importance of their full application by States parties, consistent with their commitments and obligations;

(c) *Re-emphasizes* that the protection of refugees is primarily the responsibility of States, whose full and effective cooperation, action and political resolve are required to enable the Office of the High Commissioner to fulfil its mandated functions, *inter alia*, to promote and facilitate the admission, reception and humane treatment of refugees and to ensure protection-oriented solutions, in accordance with international law and international standards;

(d) *Recognizes* that some countries of asylum, in particular developing countries and countries in transition which host large numbers of refugees and asylum-seekers carry a heavy burden;

(e) *Recognizes* the positive contributions that refugees make to host countries;

(f) *Reiterates* its strong commitment to international solidarity, burden-sharing and international cooperation to share responsibilities; *stresses* also the national and international responsibilities of countries of origin; and *reaffirms* UNHCR's catalytic role in assisting and supporting countries receiving refugees, particularly developing countries, and in mobilizing assistance from the international community to address the impact of large-scale refugee populations;

[1] Decisions adopted by the Standing Committee at inter-sessional meetings in 2001 are listed in Annex I.

(g) *Welcomes* the initiative of UNHCR to launch the Global Consultations on International Protection which provide an important forum for open discussion on complex legal and operational protection issues;

(h) *Affirms* the intention to pursue, with broadly based participation, follow-up activities stemming from the Global Consultations, which would be set out in a joint Executive Committee and UNHCR Agenda for Protection and could include, as appropriate, the development of Executive Committee conclusions, the holding of further expert consultations, or other processes;

(i) *Stresses* the importance of according special attention to the protection needs of vulnerable refugees, including women, children and the elderly, in the application of the international refugee instruments and related protection standards;

Resettlement

(j) *Emphasizes* that the ultimate goal of international protection is to achieve a durable solution for refugees and *commends* States that continue to facilitate these solutions, notably voluntary repatriation and, where appropriate and feasible, local integration and resettlement, while recognizing that voluntary repatriation in conditions of safety and dignity remains the preferred solution for refugees;

(k) *Commends* in particular efforts made by States and by UNHCR to ensure the diverse uses of resettlement as an important tool of international protection, as a durable solution to be used strategically along with the other two durable solutions, as appropriate, as part of a comprehensive approach to enhance protection, and as an expression of international solidarity and a means of burden or responsibility sharing, particularly in countries of asylum coping with large numbers of refugees or protracted refugee situations;

(l) *Acknowledges* that resettlement is a process beginning with the identification and assessment of refugees requiring protection and ultimately resulting in a durable solution leading to their successful reception and integration; and in this context takes note of the principles on the development and implementation of reception and integration practices developed by the *International Conference on the Reception and Integration of Resettled Refugees* convened in Norrkoping, Sweden, from 25 to 27 April 2001;[2]

(m) *Encourages* initiatives directed at diversifying resettlement opportunities by further increasing the number of resettlement countries, thereby sharing resettlement needs more widely, and meeting increased resettlement needs; acknowledges that capacity-building is essential to develop and sustain the necessary conditions for successful integration of resettled refugees in emerging resettlement countries, and underlines the important catalytic role which UNHCR should play in this regard; acknowledges the important role that regional arrangements have played in certain regions in supporting diversified resettlement opportunities;

[2] See EC/51/SC/INF.4., Annex

(n) *Recognizes* the importance of further strengthening tripartite partnerships, and of strategically enhancing a consultative and collaborative approach to resettlement and *notes* that further efforts are needed to ensure more responsive and speedy processing, better identification of urgent needs, and coordination; and urges further UNHCR efforts to ensure the integrity of the processing of the resettlement caseload and *encourages* States and UNHCR to continue to pursue a strategic and systematic approach to the problem of attempted fraud or other abuse;

Statelessness

(o) *Notes* the global dimension of statelessness, *welcomes* UNHCR's efforts within its mandate to broaden its activities both geographically and substantively, and *encourages* States to cooperate with UNHCR in identifying measures to reduce statelessness and in devising appropriate solutions for stateless persons who are refugees, as well as for stateless persons who are not;

(p) *Reiterates* its call for States to consider accession to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness and *encourages* UNHCR to continue to promote further accessions to and full implementation of both instruments by the States concerned;

(q) *Encourages* UNHCR to continue to make available its technical and advisory services to avoid and reduce cases of statelessness and, in this regard, to strengthen partnerships with regional and other international organizations working in this area;

(r) *Takes note* with particular concern that problems of statelessness can impact disproportionately on women and children, due to the particular operation of nationality and birth registration laws; *underlines* the importance, notably for women, of identity documentation and proper registration of births and marriages; and *calls upon* States to adopt all necessary measures in this regard;

(s) Strongly *condemning* the trafficking of persons, especially women and children, which represents a grave violation of their human rights; *expressing concern* that many victims of trafficking are rendered effectively stateless due to an inability to establish their identity and nationality status; *calls upon* States to cooperate in the establishment of identity and nationality status of victims of trafficking so as to facilitate appropriate resolutions of their situations, respecting the internationally recognized human rights of the victims.

B. Conclusion on registration of refugees and asylum-seekers

23. *The Executive Committee,*

Recalling its Conclusion No. 22 (XXXII) on the protection of asylum-seekers in situations of large-scale influx, Conclusion No. 35 (XXXV) on identity documents for refugees, Conclusion No. 39 (XXXVI) and Conclusion No. 64 (XLI) on refugee women and international protection, as well as Conclusion No. 73 (XLIV) on refugee protection and sexual violence;

Noting also that the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in article 27, calls on States Parties to issue identity papers to refugees;

Mindful of the importance accorded to registration in the independent evaluation of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response to the Kosovo crisis;

Welcoming the discussion which took place on registration in the context of the Global Consultations on International Protection;

(a) *Acknowledges* the importance of registration as a tool of protection, including protection against *refoulement*, protection against forcible recruitment, protection of access to basic rights, family reunification of refugees and identification of those in need of special assistance, and as a means to enable the quantification and assessment of needs and to implement appropriate durable solutions;

(b) *Recommends* that the registration of refugees and asylum-seekers should be guided by the following basic considerations:

(i) Registration should be a continuing process to record essential information at the time of initial displacement, as well as any subsequent demographic and other changes in the refugee population (such as births, deaths, new arrivals, departures, cessation, naturalization, etc.);

(ii) Ihe registration process should abide by the fundamental principles of confidentiality;

(iii) The registration process should to the extent possible be easily accessible, and take place in a safe and secure location;

(iv) Registration should be conducted in a non-intimidating, non-threatening and impartial manner, with due respect for the safety and dignity of refugees;

(v) Personnel conducting the registration, including, where necessary, refugees and asylum-seekers, should be adequately trained, should include a sufficient number of female staff and should have clear instructions on the procedures and requirements for registration, including the need for confidentiality of information collected; special measures should be taken to ensure the integrity of the registration process;

(vi) In principle, refugees should be registered on an individual basis with the following basic information being recorded: identity document and number, photograph, name, sex, date of birth (or age), marital status, special protection and assistance needs, level of education, occupation (skills), household (family) size and composition, date of arrival, current location and place of origin;

(c) *Encourages* States and UNHCR, on the basis of existing expertise, to develop further and implement registration guidelines to ensure the quality and comparability of registered data, especially regarding special needs, occupational skills and level of education;

(d) *Also encourages* States and UNHCR to introduce new techniques and tools to enhance the identification and documentation of refugees and asylum-seekers, including biometrics features, and to share these with a view towards developing a more standardized worldwide registration system;

(e) *Acknowledges* the importance to the international community, particularly States, UNHCR and other relevant organizations, of sharing statistical data;

(f) *Recognizes* the confidential nature of personal data and the need to continue to protect confidentiality; also recognizes that the appropriate sharing of some personal data in line with data protection principles can assist States to combat fraud, to address irregular movements of refugees and asylum-seekers, and to identify those not entitled to international protection under the 1951 Convention and/or 1967 Protocol;

(g) *Requests* States, which have not yet done so, to take all necessary measures to register and document refugees and asylum-seekers on their territory as quickly as possible upon their arrival, bearing in mind the resources available, and where appropriate to seek the support and co-operation of UNHCR;

(h) *Emphasizes* the critical role of material, financial, technical and human resources in assisting host countries in registering and documenting refugees and asylum-seekers, particularly developing countries confronted with large-scale influxes and protracted refugee situations.

C. Conclusion on the follow-up to the 1996 Geneva Conference on the problems of refugees, displaced persons, migration and asylum issues

24. *The Executive Committee,*

Recalling the relevant conclusions of the Executive Committee at its forty-seventh, forty-eighth, forty-ninth, fiftieth and fifty-first sessions pertaining to the follow-up to the 1996 Geneva Conference;

Recalling also the decision of the fifth meeting of the Steering Group (July 2000) to continue activities in the "Follow-up to the 1996 Geneva Conference on the Problems of Refugees, Displaced Persons, Migration and Asylum Issues" for five years, with the emphasis placed on four broad thematic issues;

Reaffirming the importance and continuing validity of the Programme of Action of 1996 as a basis and guiding tool for future activities;

(a) *Welcomes* the progress made in a number of the CIS countries in implementing the Programme of Action in both governmental and non-governmental sectors;

(b) *Welcomes* further the Work Plan for the Thematic Issues jointly prepared by UNHCR, IOM, OSCE and the Council of Europe in accordance with Recommendations adopted at the fifth meeting of the Steering Group;

(c) *Appreciates* the efforts made by the High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe to support the follow-up process, to mobilize resources for this, and welcomes their efforts to strengthen inter-agency cooperation;

(d) *Welcomes* the first Expert Meeting in the framework of the newly launched thematic process on the subject of Citizenship and Statelessness that was held on 11-13 December 2000 in Kyiv, as well as international efforts aimed at improving migration and border management, with due respect to refugee protection matters, and encourages all lead agencies to continue the implementation of the Work Plan;

(e) *Calls upon* Governments in all countries of the CIS, who bear the primary responsibility for addressing the acute problems of population displacement that they face, to strengthen their commitment, both practical and political, to implementing the Recommendations in the spirit of the Programme of Action, and encourages all interested States and intergovernmental organizations to participate actively in the planned activities according to their interests and priorities, thus contributing to achieving consistent and far-reaching progress in the follow-up process, which would lead to holding the first high-level review meeting in 2002, prior to the fifty-third session of the Executive Committee;

(f) *Notes* that the serious challenges faced by the countries of the region cannot be met by the resources and experience of those countries alone;

(g) *Reiterates* the importance of joint efforts in pursuing the established goals of the Programme of Action by achieving, *inter alia*, a higher level of political support, durable political solutions to conflicts, further democratization and building of civil society, full implementation of legislation, adequate cooperation on a regional or bilateral level, greater involvement of international financial institutions and development agencies, availability of financial resources, and ensuring international cooperation and support in the spirit of solidarity and burden-sharing;

(h) *Welcomes* the progress made in building civil society, particularly through the development of the non-governmental sector, the development of cooperation between NGOs and the Governments of a number of countries of the CIS, and *calls on* Governments of the countries of the CIS to further facilitate the formation and activities of NGOs and, along with international organizations, to further strengthen their cooperation with NGOs, with the aim to further encourage their continued involvement in the follow-up to the 1996 Geneva Conference.

(i) *Requests* the High Commissioner to keep the Executive Committee informed of the implementation of the Work Plan for Thematic Issues and of the progress achieved in the follow-up to the 1996 Geneva Conference.

D. Decision on administrative, financial and programme matters

25. *The Executive Committee,*

(a) *Confirms* that the activities proposed under the Annual Programme Budget for the year 2002 as set out in document A/AC.96/950 have been found, on review, to be consistent with the Statute of the Office of the High Commissioner (General Assembly Resolution 428 (V)), the High Commissioner's "Good Offices" functions as recognized, promoted or requested by the General Assembly, the Security Council, or the Secretary-General, and the relevant provisions of the *Financial Rules for Voluntary Funds Administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees;*

(b) *Approves* the programmes and budgets for Regional Programmes, Global Programmes and Headquarters under the 2002 Annual Programme Budget amounting to $ 801,683,000, including an Operational Reserve of $ 72,880,300 (representing 10 per cent of programmed activities), all of which are detailed in the Table II.1 ; which together with the United Nations Regular Budget contribution of $ 19,891,000 and provisions for Junior Professional Officers ($ 7 million) bring total requirements in 2002 to $ 828,574,000; and *authorizes* the High Commissioner within this total appropriation, to effect adjustments in Regional Programmes, Global Programmes and the Headquarters budgets;

(c) *Approves* the revised Annual Programme Budget for the year 2001 amounting to $ 782,111,600, which together with the United Nations Regular Budget contribution of $ 19,178,800 and provisions for Junior Professional Officers of $ 7 million as well as the needs under Supplementary Programmes in 2001 of $ 66,119,400, bring total requirements in 2001 to $ 874,409,800 (Table II.1, p.42);

(d) *Notes* the *Report of the Board of Auditors to the General Assembly on the Accounts of the Voluntary Funds administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the year ended 31 December 2000* (A/AC.96/949), and the High Commissioner's *Follow-up Actions to the Board of Auditors Report* (A/AC.96/949/Add.1); as well as the *Report of the ACABQ on UNHCR's Annual Programme Budget for the year 2002* (A/AC.96/950/Add.1), the *Report of the High Commissioner on the work of UNHCR's Inspection Activities* (A/AC.96/946)*and the Report on UNHCR's Evaluation Activities* (A/AC.96/947), and requests to be kept regularly informed on the measures taken to address the recommendations and the observations raised in these various oversight documents;

(e) *Requests* the High Commissioner, within the resources available, to respond flexibly and efficiently to the needs currently indicated under the Annual Programme Budget for the year 2002, and *authorizes* him, in the case of additional new emergency needs that cannot be met fully from the Operational Reserve, to create Supplementary Programmes and issue Special Appeals;

(f) *Urges* Member States, in the light of the extensive needs to be addressed by the Office of the High Commissioner, to respond generously, promptly, predictably and adequately to his appeal for resources to meet in full the approved 2002 Annual Programme Budget, and explore future ways to ensure a coherent and broader financing base, founded on the principle of solidarity and burden-sharing.

E. Decision on guidelines on supplementary activities

26. *The Executive Committee,*

Recalling the endorsement by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/146 of 17 December 1999, of a unified annual programme budget for the activities of the Office of the High Commissioner,

Noting that the Financial Rules for Voluntary Funds Administered by UNHCR define "Supplementary Programmes" as "those activities that arise after the approval of the Annual Programme Budget and before the approval of the next Annual Programme Budget, and which cannot be fully met from the Operational Reserve. They will be funded through contributions in reply to special appeals"[3],

Recalling the recommendation of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions[4] that the Executive Committee provide to the High Commissioner guidelines for undertaking supplementary activities,

Recalling the *Decision on Guiding Principles applicable to the Resourcing of UNHCR's Unified Budget* adopted by the Standing Committee at its 18th meeting[5] expressing support for regular consultations in addressing issues of resource mobilization as part of efforts to maintain full transparency on all budgetary issues,

Recalling also its decision adopted at its 21st meeting[6], *reaffirming* its support for the review undertaken by the High Commissioner under his Actions 1, 2 and 3, and *expressing its commitment* to the principles resulting from Action 1,

(a) *Proposes* the application of the following criteria in undertaking supplementary activities:

(i) The unified Annual Programme Budget should remain the framework for the activities of the Office, thereby ensuring transparency, cohesiveness and accountability for all activities undertaken in support of those of concern to the Office;

(ii) Options available for resourcing new activities include reallocations within an existing approved project budget; transfers between appropriations; and allocations from the Operational Reserve. When the volume of the activities is such that they cannot be met from resources within the approved budget level, a Supplementary Programme would be required, in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Rules. The Supplementary Programme would subsequently be incorporated into the next proposed Annual Programme Budget;

(iii) In undertaking supplementary activities, the criteria and characteristics listed by the ACABQ in its *Overview of UNHCR's activities*

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[3] A/AC.96/503/Rev.7, art. I, 1.6 (g).
[4] A/AC.96/900/Add.3, para. 40.
[5] A/AC.96/939, Annex, B.
[6] A/AC.96/956, Annex, A.

1997-1999 (A/AC.96/900, Add. 3 and 4), and in the *Guidelines on priority-setting* appended to the results of the High Commissioner's Action 1[7] should apply to these activities;

(iv) In developing or reviewing partnership agreements with other entities that may contribute to the work of the Office, particular provision should be made for their involvement and contribution to activities that are the subject of Supplementary Programmes;

(v) In the case of supplementary activities such as those relating to internally displaced persons or to longer-term reintegration activities, the Office should ensure that resources are assured and attainable.

F. Decision on programme of work of the Standing Committee in 2002

27. *The Executive Committee,*

Having reviewed the issues before it at its fifty-second session, including its general debate based on the High Commissioner's statement, the work undertaken by the Standing Committee during the year, and having in mind the decisions and conclusions of its fifty-second session;

(a) *Decides* to adopt as the framework for the programme of work of the Standing Committee in 2002 the following items: international protection; programme/protection policy; programme and funding; governance; coordination; and management, financial, oversight and human resources;

(b) *Requests* that member States review, at the Planning Meeting scheduled for December 2001, specific proposals for inclusion in the work programme for 2002, taking into consideration the calendar noted by the Planning Meeting in 2000, with a view to submitting their agreed work programme to the first Standing Committee in 2002 for formal adoption; and *requests* that member States bear in mind the desirability of scheduling items over a biennial or longer period;

(c) *Requests* that UNHCR include in its documentation on relevant items the audit and ACABQ recommendations as well as steps taken to implement those recommendations and related Executive Committee decisions and conclusions;

(d) *Authorizes* the Standing Committee to add and to delete items, as appropriate, to its inter-sessional programme of work;

(e) *Decides* to convene no more than three meetings of the Standing Committee in 2002 to be held in February/March, June/July and prior to the fifty-third plenary session of the Executive Committee;

(f) *Calls on* the Standing Committee to report on its work to the fifty-third session of the Executive Committee;

(g) *Calls upon* its members to continue efforts to ensure that the Executive Committee is a forum for substantive and interactive debate, and provides guidance that can be implemented by UNHCR within its given mandate.

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[7] See A/AC.96/950, Annex 5, pp. 109-111, paras 2.3-2.6; 3.1-3.2.

G. Decision on the provisional agenda of the fifty-third session

28. *The Executive Committee,*

Decides to adopt the following provisional agenda for the fifty-third session of the Executive Committee:

1. Opening of the session
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters
4. Annual theme
5. Reports on the work of the Standing Committee as they relate to:
   (i) international protection; and
   (ii) programme, administrative and financial matters
6. Consideration and adoption of the annual programme budget
7. Reports relating to evaluation and inspection
8. Meetings of the Standing Committee in 2003
9. Consideration of the provisional agenda of the fifty-fourth session of the Executive Committee
10. Any other business
11. Adoption of the draft report of the fifty-third session of the Executive Committee
12. Closing of the session

H. Decision on observer participation in 2001-2002

29. *The Executive Committee,*

(a) *Approves* applications by the following Government Observer delegations for participation in meetings of the Standing Committee from October 2001 to October 2002:

Albania, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cuba, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Kenya, Latvia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Myanmar, Nepal, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Swaziland, Ukraine;

(b) *Authorizes* the Standing Committee to decide upon any additional applications from Government Observer delegations to participate in its meetings during the aforementioned period;

(c) *Approves* the following list of intergovernmental and international organizations to be invited by the High Commissioner to participate as observers in relevant meetings of its Standing Committee from October 2001 to October 2002:

United Nations specialized agencies, departments, funds and programmes, European Commission, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Sovereign Order of Malta, Executive Secretariat of the Commonwealth of Independent States, League of Arab States, Organization of African Unity, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Council of Europe, International Organization for Migration.

ANNEX I

Decisions and conclusions adopted by the Standing Committee in 2001

In accordance with the authority vested in it by the Executive Committee, the Standing Committee in 2001 adopted a number of decisions on matters included in its programme of work. The texts of these decisions are annexed to the reports of Standing Committee meetings as follows:

A/AC.96/945 *Report of the twentieth meeting of the Standing Committee (12 - 14 March 2001)*

Decision on programme and funding

Conclusion on reinforcing a community development approach

A/AC.96/956 Report of the twenty-first meeting of the Standing Committee (25 - 27 June 2001)

Decision on overall programme and funding projections for 2001

Decision on proposals for budget structure

ANNEX II

Opening Statement by the
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
at the Fifty-second Session of the Executive Committee
of the High Commissioner's Programme

(Monday, 1 October 2001)

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to be with you here today - this being my first plenary session of the Executive Committee. I have met many of you individually over the last few months, but it is good to see all of you together. I am particularly pleased to welcome Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who has kindly agreed to address the Executive Committee.

Let me begin by extending a special welcome to Mexico as a new member of the Committee. I would like to congratulate the incoming Bureau and its Chairman, Ambassador Molander of Sweden. His experience and knowledge of refugee affairs will certainly be an asset to the Committee. I would also like to thank the outgoing Chairman, Ambassador Khorram of the Islamic Republic of Iran. It was privilege to work with him. I greatly appreciate the commitment that he has shown to refugees and to the work of this Committee over the last year, and I hope we will continue to benefit from his keen insight.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

My first nine months have gone by very quickly. It did not take long for me to learn what a rich history this Office has. In particular, I have been deeply impressed by the high calibre and dedication of its staff, many of whom make enormous personal sacrifices and risk their lives daily to help others. I would like to pay particular tribute to my predecessor, Mrs Sadako Ogata - a great woman and a great leader.

I arrived at a difficult moment, but also at an interesting and challenging time. Last year, UNHCR commemorated its 50th anniversary. This year, we mark the 50th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention. These two occasions allow us to take a fresh look at where we stand today, and to review the direction in which we are heading.

In her statement to the Executive Committee last year, Mrs Ogata identified a number of key challenges for UNHCR. Foremost was the need to strengthen UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response capacity. This is vital, as we are constantly facing new emergencies. The first major crisis I had to deal with this year was in Guinea, where my top priority was to ensure safe access to and safe passage for refugees. I was able to make progress by linking up with a political process, convincing the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone to change its agenda. This was followed by yet another crisis in the Balkans, with more than 100,000 people being forced to flee their homes in the

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I was there on Friday last week, consolidating the important work that we have begun there. In the first eight months of this year, we provided emergency support to 22 countries.

All this was before the barbaric terrorist attacks on the United States of America on 11 September. These attacks, and the unfolding humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the surrounding countries, are a sobering reminder that emergencies are hard to predict. We need to be ready at all times, and - together with our partners - we need to be able to respond to new crises in an efficient and co-ordinated manner. Indeed, we have taken a number of measures over the last year to further enhance our emergency preparedness and response capacity. In particular, improved training of staff, an increase in the number of deployable emergency core staff, new stand-by arrangements with governments and partners, and an increase in our emergency stockpile.

For the current humanitarian emergency in and around Afghanistan, as you know we are preparing for a massive relief operation. I hope that donors will respond positively to our appeal for US$ 268 million to cover the next six months. This will enable us to prepare for an influx of up to 1.5 million refugees into neighbouring countries - particularly Pakistan and Iran. We count on donors' generosity.

Another serious challenge for UNHCR is staff security. The events of September last year, when three of our colleagues were savagely killed in West Timor and another was brutally murdered in Guinea, remain imprinted on all of our minds as some of the darkest days in UNHCR's history. But it did not end there. Another of our colleagues was murdered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in March this year, and this was followed barely a month later by the appalling killings of six members of the International Committee of the Red Cross. All these deaths are a reminder of the tremendous sacrifices made every year by humanitarian staff who risk their lives to save others in some of the most dangerous corners of the world. As a tribute to our slain colleagues, a permanent memorial will be inaugurated on 12 December in front of the UNHCR Headquarters. It will serve as a constant reminder.

But while it is important to remember the past, we must also prepare for the future. Addressing the staff security issue will remain one of my major priorities. Our mission will never be without risks, as we need to be close to those whom we serve. But there are limits as to what we can accept. Proper training and the provision of the necessary technical equipment are basic minimum conditions for operating in remote duty stations.

In the last year, we have set up new security training courses for staff and redefined the responsibilities and accountability of managers. We have also supported the enhancement of UNSECOORD, the UN system-wide security mechanism. But there are still major problems to overcome. I have strongly protested to the authorities in Indonesia about the unacceptably light sentences given to those responsible for the murder of our colleagues in West Timor. We must take steps to ensure that there is no impunity for those who attack humanitarian staff. Funding constraints also affect us. Let me be blunt. Expressions of sympathy for the deaths of our colleagues mean little when the resources needed to improve security are not forthcoming.

Let me then turn to another major challenge for UNHCR: the management of complex population flows. This includes "mixed flows" of refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants, and "mixed-motive" migration, where people leave their homes for a combination of political, economic and other reasons. Smuggling and trafficking of people is on the rise. With regular arrival routes closed, many refugees continue to turn to smugglers to reach safety, in spite of the dangers and the financial costs involved. Other migrants portray themselves as refugees to overcome immigration barriers. The result is that refugees are often stigmatised in the public mind. This presents two main challenges: governments must find ways of handling asylum applications more quickly and fairly, and politicians and people in receiving countries must avoid stereotyping all asylum seekers as "phoney" or "bogus", if not criminals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Efforts to protect refugees are of limited value if durable solutions are not found. This is key. Voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement: these are, as you know, the three durable solutions. We must focus more on these, together with governments and our partners. I see this as the heart of my mission: not 'protection' alone, but 'protection and solutions'. For protection is not protection if there are no solutions.

Failure to provide solutions makes us all guilty of the degradation of refugees. It can also lead to a rise in crime and the threat of further conflict or instability. We must guard against this. The unacceptable alternatives when we do not provide durable solutions are more protracted refugee situations, more refugees languishing in refugee camps year after year, more refugees taking desperate measures to find safety and a better future, and more refugees being exploited by criminal networks.

To enable sustainable local integration of refugees and re-integration of returnees, we also need to find a more effective way to close the gap between emergency relief and longer-term development. Most development assistance excludes refugees. As I reported to ECOSOC in July, I see this as a big mistake. I do not believe that refugees can be dismissed as an issue peripheral to development. Africa is home to more than 5.3 million refugees and other people of concern to my Office. Their productive potential is enormous. In many African countries, I would venture to say, sustainable development will be very difficult to achieve if the productive capacities of refugees are ignored by host countries or by their own governments as they return home. This challenge arises not only in Africa. The new authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia are coming to terms with the reality that several hundred thousand refugees may never return home. The quality of life these people - and their children - will have in the future will depend upon reconstruction and development activities in Serbia, not upon humanitarian aid.

Refugees are often seen as a burden, and I do not want to underestimate the humanitarian and security issues related to the presence of large refugee populations. But I would argue for a more enlightened and integrated view. Refugees are not simply the beneficiaries of humanitarian aid. They are potential contributors to development - both in their countries of asylum and upon their return home. We therefore need to rethink the relationship of refugees to development. And we need to do this thinking not far away in

conferences in New York, Washington or Geneva, but on the spot, together with our donors and partners, in the places where day by day we have to remove the obstacles. Such facile statements as "development is long-term" and "humanitarian assistance is short-term" are not useful. They simply miss the point. The search for durable solutions should begin at the outset of every humanitarian emergency.

I would like to repeat the call that I made at the Least Developed Countries Conference in Brussels in May. Donors should allocate or "earmark" a modest, at least proportional, share of development assistance funding for the inter-related issues of refugees, internally displaced people and affected local populations.

Yet another challenge for UNHCR is to find ways of promoting co-existence and reconciliation in divided communities. Last year UNHCR launched an initiative called "Imagine Co-existence", with pilot projects in Bosnia and Rwanda. These projects are candles in the dark of xenophobia. I will be working closely with Mrs Ogata in her capacity as Co-Chair of the International Commission on Human Security to follow up on these projects.

These are ongoing challenges that were mentioned last year. But the world is changing fast, and UNHCR has to be able to adapt. The recent terrorist attacks have already unleashed a wave of discriminatory assaults and provocations on people of Muslim origin in a number of countries. Xenophobia and intolerance, which is already present in so many societies, may escalate and lead to further discrimination against refugees, asylum seekers and minority groups across the world. We need to battle against xenophobia and be prepared for the formidable protection challenges that lie ahead.

Organisational management

Ladies and gentlemen,

UNHCR now finds itself operating in a crowded space, with diverse actors and limited funds. Clearly, we cannot continue to think of "business as usual". We need to re-examine the way in which we carry out our mandate to ensure the protection of refugees and durable solutions.

During my first nine months in office I have taken a number of measures to sharpen the focus of the organisation and to strengthen our capacity to meet tomorrow's challenges. This has involved new appointments, changes to our organisational structure and new policy directives.

I would like to pay tribute to the former Deputy High Commissioner, Rick Barton. He has been replaced by Mary Ann Wyrsch, who joined us in April, and whose wide-ranging management experience I warmly welcome. I would, of course, also like to pay tribute to the Assistant High Commissioner, Soren Jessen-Petersen, who is well known to all of you and who will be leaving us in this month after a long and distinguished career with the organisation. When I first arrived, he advised me that something would have to be done about the geographical balance in the Executive Office. He pointed out that there were now two of us from northern Europe, and he suggested that I look for another Assistant High Commissioner. I am sure you will join me in wishing him all the best in his future endeavours.

In his place, I am pleased to welcome Kamel Morjane, who was with UNHCR for almost 20 years and who was until recently the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I have created a core top management team - a "seamless Troika" - composed of the High Commissioner, Deputy High Commissioner and Assistant High Commissioner. Under the new structure, the Director of the Department of International Protection continues to report directly to the High Commissioner.

It is important to stress that the role of the Deputy High Commissioner has been significantly strengthened. I have created a new management structure in which all internal resource management issues are channelled through the Deputy High Commissioner and all operational management issues are channelled through the Assistant High Commissioner. The Deputy High Commissioner will be responsible for tightening up our systems for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating our programmes. It is clear that in our strategic planning, we need to focus less on inputs and more on performance, systematically evaluating our activities and following this up with appropriate corrective action.

I have revitalised the senior management with a number of new appointments including new leadership in the Department of Resource Management, the Department of Operational Support, the regional bureaux for the Americas, Asia and CASWANAME, the Inspector-General's office and in other crucial areas such as the Human Resources Service. Through all these changes, I have been able to not only introduce new talent into the organisation, but also to ensure a greatly improved gender balance within the organisation's senior management as well as geographical diversity. Rotation is good after some years, not only in the field but also with directors.

I have also taken measures to strengthen our internal investigation and oversight mechanisms. I am particularly concerned about allegations of corruption linked to resettlement in our Nairobi office. A comprehensive reform plan is now being implemented in Kenya and efforts will be made to ensure that the lessons learnt from this operation are applied globally. I am determined to do everything possible to minimise such abuse and to ensure that resettlement remains a key protection tool.

When I took up my appointment, a 20 per cent budget freeze had been imposed on all our operations across the board. This was because donors had made it clear that the budget of US$ 955 million - which had been approved by the Executive Committee only three months before - was not fundable. Moreover, UNHCR was regarded by some as being unfocused and without a clear sense of mission. Since then, we have had the "Actions 1, 2 & 3" exercise. Under this process, we reduced our 2001 budget by roughly 10%, while the number of staff posts were reduced by 16%.

Action 1, which has now been completed, entailed defining UNHCR's core activities. This proved useful in helping to define UNHCR's strategic direction. Donor reactions, however, varied. Everyone was pleased that we carried out this exercise. But while some donors had strongly urged the Office to re-prioritise its activities and to scale back or withdraw from some sectors, others - and sometimes even the same donors - were reluctant to see this happen when concrete proposals were put on the table. The call for a more focused UNHCR was unanimous. But there was less unanimity on how this should be achieved.

A contentious issue was that of defining UNHCR's role vis a vis internally displaced persons. UNHCR inevitably has an important role to play in situations where the same root causes give rise to both internal displacement and movement of refugees across borders, or where internally displaced people live side by side with refugees or returnees. Indeed, almost a third of the people currently of concern to UNHCR are internally displaced. I am willing to continue programmes to support the internally displaced and to take on new ones where there is a need. However, programmes to assist the internally displaced should be contingent upon additional funding being made available by donors. Against this background, in September I issued new Operational Guidelines clarifying criteria for UNHCR's involvement with internally displaced persons. Let me stress that we will continue to work with internally displaced persons when they are found in the situations I have described.

Action 2 entailed a thorough review of our operations and internal structure, setting priorities on the basis of Action 1. It also entailed taking immediate steps to manage with fewer resources, through greater austerity and efficiency. The revised needs for 2001 (including Supplementary Programmes and the UN Regular Budget) now stands at US$ 882 million (excluding the Afghanistan emergency operation), and I have proposed a budget of US$ 828 million for 2002. Our efforts to ensure greater efficiency are illustrated by the fact that there has been a significant reduction in our staffing level while there has been no real change in the number of people of concern to the Office. Also, while most of the savings were made in the field rather than at Headquarters, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that between 1995 and 2000, there was a radical reduction in Headquarters expenditure by 34%. I am convinced, therefore, that we are already close to reaching our optimum size at Headquarters.

One of the results of this prioritisation exercise was a greater appreciation of the importance of effective partnerships in fulfilling UNHCR's protection mandate and achieving durable solutions. Partnership is key for us. At the same time, it was clear that we could not simply cut activities where other actors were not willing to take on new responsibilities.

While the Action 2 planning phase is over, implementation continues. This involves the closure of 11 country offices and a reduction of our staff by 16% (760 posts). A total of 219 staff were recently reassigned under an Accelerated Postings Procedure. I am fully aware that the reduction in staff posts has created a great deal of uncertainty and anxiety for many colleagues and their families. To minimise the impact and limit the negative effects of what is clearly a painful undertaking, we have put in place a number of measures including Early Retirement and Voluntary Separation Programmes. Throughout this exercise we have benefited from the constructive engagement of the Staff Council.

The question now is: did we make sufficient savings? If one does a historical comparison of numbers of people of concern to UNHCR versus budget, the answer is clearly Yes. The current working budget amounts to less than US$ 40 per year for each person of concern to UNHCR. This is considerably lower than most previous years. I consider this budget to be the absolute minimum. There are already important needs that cannot be met with this budget. If any governments feel that UNHCR can effectively operate with less, I would like them to explain how.

Action 3 is an ongoing process. This involves reviewing fundraising in the broadest sense. I recognise that burden-sharing should be seen not only in terms of cash contributions, and I appreciate very much the efforts of countries hosting large refugee populations and countries of resettlement, but clearly these efforts do not negate the need for an adequately equipped UNHCR. I have already conveyed to donors the importance of considering a minimum level of contributions to UNHCR, commensurate with the Office's role as a multilateral organisation with a global mandate to ensure the international protection of refugees. In this context, I have suggested an amount of one dollar or one Euro per citizen as an objective to be reached over a number of years. At the same time, I hope that our most generous donors - who already exceed this amount - will continue to fund us at the current levels.

I have also set up a number of initiatives to diversify UNHCR's base of support. This has included the upgrading and professionalisation of our private sector fundraising efforts, the appointment of a Special Representative to the members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and the League of Arab States, and an intensive dialogue on partnership with the European Union and European Commission. I regret very much that we still do not see the representative of the EU Presidency, Ambassador Noirfalisse, and the representative of the European Commission, Ambassador Trojan, sitting next to each other in this meeting. I consider this, after the Treaty of Amsterdam and the Tampere proposals, somewhat painful.

I am aware that donors often limit their contributions to UNHCR because of complaints about the quality of our programmes. Let me say a few words on this as I take this very seriously. I recognise that in some cases we can improve our performance with the same money. I am determined, together with the Deputy High Commissioner and the incoming Assistant High Commissioner, to pursue this. But in other cases we can only do so with additional resources. We need your help. We must find better mechanisms to avoid the chronic budget shortfalls and under-funding that we have experienced recently. Such shortfalls both impact negatively on quality and performance and - in vicious circle - they further weaken UNHCR's ability to mobilise resources.

Concerning the budget for 2001, I would like to ask donors who have expressed their intention to provide funds in the last quarter to do so generously and in a timely manner. We have yet to receive over US$ 100 million already indicated, and even then we will still have a shortfall of about US$ 50 million. I welcome the new contributions for the Afghan emergency operation, but these should not be at the expense of programmes in other parts of the world, many of which have already been scaled back.

For 2002, the "soft commitments" that we have received so far provide only partial reassurance that the proposed budget will be fully funded. I am grateful to donors who have already come forward, but I would welcome further commitments. I hope that no donors will diminish their level of funding in comparison with 2000 and 2001. On the contrary, I hope that many will increase their contributions to come nearer to the level of one dollar or one Euro per citizen.

Global governance of refugees

Ladies and gentlemen,

Refugees and asylum seekers have been in the international media spotlight a great deal in recent weeks - in the Balkans, at the Sangatte reception centre in France, on the Norwegian freighter in the South Pacific, and now the crisis in Afghanistan. Each of these have illustrated the severity of the refugee problem. Each has also illustrated the need for UNHCR to adapt to a changing international political environment; an environment that - to be frank - is not changing to the good.

We face many threats. These include: restrictive interpretation of the 1951 Convention, the deteriorating quality of asylum, the high costs and burdens of hosting refugees - especially in protracted refugee situations with no solutions in sight - and the perceived abuse of asylum systems.

Against this backdrop, the Global Consultations on International Protection were launched last year. The purpose of this process, on the one hand, is to seek to promote the full and effective implementation of the 1951 Convention, and on the other, to develop complementary new approaches, tools and standards to ensure the availability of international protection and durable solutions.

The Ministerial Meeting in December will be the first ever meeting of States Parties to the 1951 Convention and will be a real milestone. The level of interest amongst States has been so high that we have had to make it a two day meeting, rather than one day as initially planned. A draft Declaration has been drawn up, which - although not binding - will send a powerful message.

The Global Consultations are providing a unique opportunity for an open, frank and constructive dialogue with governments, NGOs, refugee experts and refugees themselves and will help to shape an Agenda for Protection for the coming years. There have already been good discussions on concrete policy and operational problems, such as the separation of armed elements, registration of refugees and mechanisms of burden and responsibility sharing. New standard setting, operational guidelines and policy approaches are expected outcomes of this process. Together, they will provide a guiding road map for UNHCR, States, NGOs and other protection partners, setting out shared strategic goals and recommending key actions for the years ahead.

The question that arises, is whether or not UNHCR - as it stands today in legal and formal terms, as it is positioned within the UN family, and as it is currently funded - will be able to meet the challenges of responding to the refugee situations of tomorrow. There are signals that UNHCR is not adequately positioned as a multilateral institution to address the problems we are required to handle under our mandate. To address these long-term questions, I have launched the "UNHCR 2004" process. The aim of this is to develop a concept of how UNHCR could be positioned better to carry out its mandate. This should be developed in time for 1 January 2004, when our current mandate comes up for renewal. In carrying out this exercise, I will take into account the outcomes of the three tracks of the Global Consultations.

Finally, a few words about the subject that is uppermost in most people's minds at the moment: the fight against international terrorism. As the Secretary-General has stated, no people, no region and no religion should be condemned because of the unspeakable acts of a few individuals. We must all guard against a rising tide of xenophobia and intolerance. Refugees and asylum seekers are already the objects of considerable mistrust and hostility in many countries,

and they are particularly vulnerable in the current climate. We should beware of those politicians who claim to pursue the public cause but simply exploit racial instincts. Fighting against xenophobia must be at a top priority for us all.

Afghans are particularly vulnerable. Even before the barbaric acts of 11 September, Afghans constituted the largest refugee population in the world, with some four million spread out between Iran, Pakistan and a multitude of other countries across the world. A war on terrorism should not become a war on Afghans. Neither should it become a war on Islam.

Each of the solutions for refugee problems - voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement - have one thing in common: each is only attainable when there is respect. Respect for refugees going home; respect for refugees who can be instrumental in local development; respect for the refugees who come from far away and who can enrich our societies. Let us therefore talk about respect. A respect which goes beyond tolerance. Respect for people of every ethnic, religious, social and cultural background.

Everyone shares in the responsibility of ensuring respect for the individual dignity and worth of each and every refugee. Politicians and the media have a special charge to keep in combating racism, xenophobia and intolerance, and in resisting the temptation to scapegoat refugees. Let us therefore work together to create a culture of respect. The people who are of concern to UNHCR deserve it.

Thank you.

ANNEX III

Chairman's Summing up of the General Debate

(Tuesday, 3 October 2001)

After a half a century of concerted effort by the international community to address the problems associated with refugees and displaced persons, the High Commissioner has indeed questioned and challenged our assumptions about the way forward. During our discussion over the past two and a half days we have tried to take up this challenge and give some answers to the dilemmas UNHCR is faced with. Delegations have provided fresh insights and stimulated broader thinking, enabling us to look at refugees from different perspectives, many of them innovative.

In the face of major problems - the resurgence of global terrorism and a resulting heightened emergency in Afghanistan, on-going refugee situations, budget shortfalls - it is clear that delegations have responded very positively to the High Commissioner's new approaches and efforts to define a clear vision for the future of the Office. These are embodied in such initiatives as Actions 1, 2 and 3, the on-going Global Consultations, and the "UNHCR 2004" process.

Delegations have expressed support for identifying the core activities of UNHCR's work, results-based budgeting, the need for more stable, predictable and adequate funding and efforts to broaden the donor base. Several speakers recognized the usefulness of the High Commissioner's call for "soft commitments" by already indicating levels of contributions for the coming year. Statements that some cash-donors are opening new development-oriented funding windows are also welcome. At the same time many cautioned against implementation of belt tightening measures that compromise vital services to refugees. Others expressed concern that classifying some measures as non-core activities may have a negative impact on long-term solutions.

Delegations reiterated support for the Global Consultations on International Protection and the role of the 1951 Convention as the cornerstone of the international protection regime. Indeed several speakers urged those who have not yet done so to accede as soon as possible to the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol. Strong support was also voiced for the upcoming Ministerial Meeting of the Global Consultations and the Declaration that will result from this process. I welcome the announcement that many Governments will participate at a high level in this important meeting. Many delegations also indicated that they looked forward to the outcome of the Global Consultations process, in particular the early formulation of an Agenda for Protection, which may serve as a useful roadmap for the strengthening of the international protection regime.

The expressions of commitment to work with the High Commissioner as partners -- Member States, sister agencies, regional, intergovernmental, and other organizations -- in the search for durable solutions is another positive message. I might add here that it has been gratifying to see the extent of interaction between UNHCR and NGOs in the three days of meetings during the pre-ExCom session and the various panels

that have met during the week. The discussions which have taken place have been thoughtful and enlightening; they bode well for future cooperation. We have seen that such collaborative, operational partnerships can be vehicles for capacity-building and utilize local knowledge and connections in responding to some of the more challenging issues that confront UNHCR.

In addition to support for these ongoing activities, the need for UNHCR to look to the future was also recognized through the support voiced for the "UNHCR 2004" process. As the High Commissioner pointed out, five decades after the establishment of his Office, UNHCR must adapt to the realities of a constantly changing political environment. It must conceptualize how to position itself more effectively to carry out its mandate within a global governance framework to address the refugee challenges of tomorrow.

There were also a number of other themes touched upon during the course of our General Debate. In condemning the tragic events of 11 September and the resurgence of global terrorism, delegations called for cooperation in fighting this scourge. At the same time the High Commissioner's warnings to guard against the dangers of xenophobia and intolerance were welcomed. Strong support was expressed for the efforts of UNHCR to deal with the situation in Afghanistan, while at the same time not ignoring other refugee situations which continue to need our attention.

Staff safety and security, as well as the physical protection of refugees, has been highlighted as a key issue. Some delegations also stressed the need to address the presence of combatants in the midst of refugee populations. This Committee has indicated its desire to be more aware of situations in the field under which humanitarian staff operate and where refugees live. Indeed, as I said in my opening statement, we must remain cognizant of the realities on the ground.

There were many expressions of concern about maintaining the institution of asylum and fair asylum procedures, the link between refugee issues and migration and the difficulties of dealing with mixed-migration flows. In responding to refugee flows delegations noted the importance of comprehensive approaches that recognize the burdens borne by host countries. In addition, many speakers called for the strengthening of emergency response mechanisms; the need for comprehensive approaches to address root causes; the link between humanitarian assistance and development; the benefit of including refugee issues in development planning; the importance of national capacity-building; the need to promote international solidarity and responsibility or burden-sharing; and the benefits of regional and sub-regional cooperation, as exemplified by the statements from the EU Presidency, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Organization of African Unity and the Southern African Development Community, amongst others, which could inspire such cooperation in other areas.

I was particularly gratified to hear several delegations and many of our panellists echo a theme that both the High Commissioner and I addressed in our opening presentations regarding how to involve refugees directly in the search for durable solutions, in particular sustainable

repatriation or integration. Many speakers commented on the importance of restoring dignity to refugees, recognizing their potential for contributions to their communities, and showing them the respect that they deserve. If we can carry these attitudes out of this meeting and into the field, we will have made a significant step forward in responding to the challenges of the future. If we can do this, it will bring us one step closer to what one delegation described as the deeper meaning of the Durban Conference -- the need to find "a way to overcome divisions of culture, civilization, even of religion, so that we can create an inclusive family of humankind".

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